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Fully-Paid for Legislation Will Prevent Layoffs of Police Officers, Teachers, Nurses, and Firefighters

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) promptly returned to Washington this week to vote on critical legislation that would save hundreds of thousands of teaching jobs and prevent the layoffs of police officers, firefighters, and nurses. The Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act (H.R. 1586) will keep 161,000 teachers in the classroom and provide \$16.1 billion in health assistance for struggling states, in turn providing budget relief that will create or save 158,000 jobs in law enforcement and the private sector.

"This is a jobs bill that will keep 161,000 teachers - including 2,800 Minnesota jobs - in the classroom rather than in the unemployment line," said Congresswoman McCollum. "This is a bill that prevents thousands of first-responders who are protecting our communities today from losing their jobs tomorrow."

Although Congress is currently in recess, Democratic leadership called the House of Representatives back into session to consider and vote on this emergency assistance package. Many U.S. states are fighting fiscal crises in their budgets, which are forcing drastic cutbacks in spending. As a result, thousands of these essential jobs are on the chopping block as well as Medicaid funding. Both of these elements put the welfare of millions of Americans and their communities at risk.

While it is a spending bill, H.R. 1586 is already fully paid for, largely in part because it closes a loophole that encourages corporations to ship American jobs overseas. It also will reduce the federal budget deficit by \$1.4 billion over the next decade.

"The \$10 billion provided to keep 161,000 teachers working for our children should be a litmus test for voters," continued Congresswoman McCollum. "This is a vote for jobs and for our children's future. This is a vote that will expose Republicans as either defenders of jobs or as nothing more than a party that cuts taxes for the rich, protects Wall Street executives, and is willing to throw 161,000 public school teachers out on the street while our children suffer."

"While paying for a bill that is projected to save or create nearly 320,000 jobs is not easy, I cannot hide my disappointment that nearly \$12 billion in offsets were achieved by reducing benefits to food stamp recipients starting in 2014," concluded Congresswoman McCollum. "I hope the reductions in benefits, which are provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, are restored and hungry families are not forced to bear the burden of providing fiscal relief to state governments."

The U.S. economy is slowly recovering, but it is still in an extremely fragile state, and that is apparent in states' struggling budgets. In the last three months, state and local governments have been forced to eliminate 100,000 jobs in their efforts to reduce spending and balance budgets. Congress' passage of H.R. 1586 will alleviate some of this fiscal burden while putting Americans back to work.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.

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